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Social and human rights questions: advancement of women

Report of the Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women on its sixth session

Summary

The Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) held its sixth session on 23 April 2009. The Executive Board considered: (a) the election of Executive Board officers; (b) the directorship of the Institute; (c) the Management Support Services consultancy; (d) the implementation of the programme of work during the period from 1 October 2008 to 31 March 2009; and (e) the workplan and operational budget for 2009.

The Executive Board also:

- Reiterated the need to fill the post of Director and other vacant posts in the Institute
- Took note of the progress made in the second consultancy conducted by Management Support Services and the steps taken by INSTRAW to strengthen the Institute
- Took note with appreciation of the work undertaken by the Institute in the implementation of its programme of work during the period from 1 October 2008 to 31 March 2009
- Expressed satisfaction at the results of the audit of the Institute
- Approved modifications to the workplan and operational budget for 2009

* E/2009/100.

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I. Organization of the session

1. The following members of the Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) participated in the sixth session, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 23 April 2009: Belarus, Egypt, Honduras, Israel, Philippines, Slovakia, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic and Zimbabwe.

2. The following ex officio members participated in the session: a representative of the Dominican Republic (host country); a representative of the United Nations regional commissions; and the Acting Director of INSTRAW. The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women represented the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. Also in attendance were representatives from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Information Officer of INSTRAW. The list of participants is contained in the annex to the present report.

3. In accordance with article IV, rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the Executive Board, the representative of the Philippines presided over the session.

Opening statements

4. The meeting was opened by the representative of the Philippines as Acting President of the Executive Board, who welcomed members and other participants to the session.

Election of officers

5. The Executive Board decided to postpone the election of new officers until its resumed sixth session.

Adoption of the agenda

6. The provisional agenda as contained in document INSTRAW/EB/2009/R.1 was modified at the recommendation of the Acting President of the Executive Board, and the agenda was adopted as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Directorship of the Institute.
5. Management Support Services consultancy.
6. Implementation of the programme of work during the period from 1 October 2008 to 31 March 2009.
7. Workplan and operational budget for 2009.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Directorship of the Institute

7. The Acting President of the Executive Board expressed her appreciation to the Board members for their continued contributions to the process to recruit the Director of INSTRAW and for ensuring that the issue remained a priority on the agenda of the Secretariat.

8. The Executive Board was informed of the status of the recruitment process by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Executive Officer of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

9. It was explained to the Board that, on the basis of concerns regarding the sustainability of the financial viability of the Institute and the need to appoint a suitable Director, the Secretary-General had recommended that, pending the appointment of such a Director, an interim Director (first interim Director) be appointed immediately to fill the position on a short-term basis. Concurrently, an internal recruitment process would be initiated for a second, longer-term interim Director. The first interim Director is expected to start on 1 May 2009 and, once identified, the second interim Director is expected to fill the role until the end of 2009, in line with the Institute's current authorized staffing table. The Board was informed that the appointment of two interim Directors would not affect the ongoing process to recruit the Director of INSTRAW.

10. It was stated that the Office of the Secretary-General considered that it was particularly pressing to appoint an interim Director to guide the work of the Institute in view of the impending departure of the Social Affairs Officer of INSTRAW, who has been serving as the Institute's Acting Director, in its highest-ranking professional post. Executive Board members and representatives of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women expressed their appreciation to the Social Affairs Officer for her work with INSTRAW, particularly in her role as Acting Director of the Institute, as well as their regret over her departure.

11. With regard to the short list of candidates previously recommended by the Executive Board to the Secretary-General, the Board was informed that the vacancy for the post would be recirculated for additional applications.

12. The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women invited the Executive Board to work with the Office of the Special Adviser to secure funds for INSTRAW.

13. The Acting Director of INSTRAW underlined the importance of filling the vacant posts in the Institute, including that of Social Affairs Officer, in accordance with the recommendations of the recent audit of the Institute by the external board of auditors (March 2009).

14. The Acting President of the Executive Board stated that the issue of the directorship of the Institute would continue to be addressed at future sessions of the Executive Board.

B. Management Support Services consultancy

15. Following the review of the report on the proposal for institutional strengthening (INSTRAW/EB/2009/R.3) and a presentation by the Chief of Management Support Services of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management, the Executive Board took note with appreciation of the work of Management Support Services and INSTRAW staff in furthering the results of the second consultancy.

16. After considering the suggestions proposed in the report on institutional strengthening, the Executive Board expressed agreement with regard to:

(a) The importance of having INSTRAW staff based in other regions outside the Institute headquarters;

(b) Support for amending the statutes of the Institute to allow for funds from the United Nations regular budget;

(c) The importance of having a staff member of INSTRAW based at United Nations Headquarters in New York;

(d) The necessity of filling vacant posts, particularly the position of Deputy Director.

17. With regard to the issue of communications between INSTRAW and United Nations Headquarters and other entities, the Chief of Management Support Services reported that improvements had been made in many areas; however, the lack of staff presence in New York continued to serve as an obstacle to advancing the agenda of the Institute, particularly in terms of discussions regarding the reform of the United Nations gender equality architecture, in which the Institute had participated by telephone.

18. The Board requested that Management Support Services continue to be available to support the Institute in briefing the second interim Director on the proposals for strengthening the operations of the Institute, which would then be taken up for further discussion at the resumed sixth session of the Board.

C. Implementation of the programme of work

19. Following the presentation by the Acting Director, the Executive Board took note with appreciation of the report on the implementation of the programme of work (INSTRAW/EB/2009/R.2).

20. The Board also took note of the progress made in the formation of alliances with United Nations entities and other organizations, and emphasized the value of those partnerships in strengthening the Institute.

21. The Board commended INSTRAW for the expansion and diversification of its work in other regions, particularly in Africa.

22. The Acting President of the Executive Board noted with satisfaction the work of the Board and INSTRAW to increase the visibility of the Institute and reach additional stakeholders.

23. The Board also expressed its satisfaction with the positive conclusions of the audit team.

D. Workplan and operational budget for 2009

24. The Executive Board reviewed the proposed modifications to the workplan and operational budget as contained in document INSTRAW/EB/2009/R.4, and approved the suggested reallocation of savings from 2008 and 2009 towards budget lines for consultants' fees and travel and general temporary assistance.

III. Closing of the session

25. The Executive Board decided to consider the possibility of convening the resumed sixth session once the second interim Director has assumed the post, and also decided that the dates of the subsequent session would be determined after consultation with the members of the Board.

Annex

List of participants

Sixth session, 23 April 2009

Members of the Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

Country	*Representative*
Belarus	Alexander Strigelsky, Second Secretary
Egypt	Soha Gendi, Counsellor
Honduras	Ana Lourdes Balladares, Attaché
Israel	Meirav Eilon Shahar, Counsellor
Philippines	Marie Yvette L. Banzon-Abalos, Second Secretary
Slovakia	Viera Hanuláková, Director of the Gender Policy Department, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
Spain	Ana Jiménez de la Hoz, Counsellor
Syrian Arab Republic	Warif Halabi, Second Secretary
Zimbabwe	Sophia Nyamudeza, Minister Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative

Ex-officio members

Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs	Represented by Rachel Mayanja, Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women
Host country — Dominican Republic	Alexandra Arias Orlowska, Minister Counsellor
United Nations regional commissions	Daniela Simioni
International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women	Carolina Taborga, Acting Director

Others: Hilary Anderson, Information Officer, International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women; Catherine Peluso, Executive Officer, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Paulette Woolf, Chief, Management Support Services, Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management.